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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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SOUL-REST.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATT. xi. 28.

At the time these words were spoken it is probable that there was in the world as much confusion, revolution, overthrow of various kinds, and suffering of every kind, as at any one single point in history; and nowhere could our Saviour have planted his foot in the midst of so much uncertainty and distress as existed in Palestine. All his early ministry was in Galilee—Galilee of the Gentiles, it is sometimes called, because there was such an infusion of foreign elements in the northern part of Palestine. Through the valley of Esdraelon was the way of commerce from Tyre and Sidon, across to Moab and the interior lands beyond. It was desolated incessantly by incursions, because it was the richest portion of the land. It was the battle-ground of nations. Hardly any other point in the East has seen so much of fighting as the northern part of Palestine. It happened to be geographically so placed, it stood in such a way amidst the nations around about it, that there never was an invasion that Palestine did not take a portion of it. So the detritus of the Assyrian army in the early day, of the Roman army, of the Grecian army, of armed hosts from every direction, left something there; and the population was cosmopolitan, in the worst sense of the term.

Here, too, was felt the power of the oppression of government. The Jewish people were taxed to the uttermost, and the extremest cruelty in the execution and collection of the taxes was practised. All arts were blighted, all indus-

SUNDAY MORNING, Nov. 22, 1874. LESSON: Matt. xi. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1272, 878, 868.

tries were scotched, and the common people suffered exceedingly—so much so that the bread for to-morrow was a matter of uncertainty to the vast majority, probably, of those who swarmed the great thoroughfares of the north. We may infer that from the fact of the petition being put into the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." The nation must have been reduced very low when, in such a frugal prayer as the Lord's, the almost universal cry should be "Bread!" as it was.

So, then, as he stood and looked around upon the multitudes that followed him, and that would follow him by the week for the sake of getting the miracle of the loaves and fishes, or in the hope of gaining something, healing or what not, he never saw a more distressed crowd; and it was not strange that they thronged about him on account of these temporal benefits. It is not strange, either, that he was obliged to say incessantly to them, while healing the sick, while curing the blind, while raising the dead, while in a thousand ways exercising charity toward the feeble and the sick—it is not strange that under such circumstances he was incessantly obliged to say to them, "A man's life does not consist of lower things; it is not the bread that you eat with the mouth: it is the bread that cometh down from above—this is that which you need. It is not enough for you to be happy in your common social relations. You are more than the beasts that perish: you are the sons of God. You have something that cannot be fed with these lower elements. There is that in you which cannot be satisfied by secular things. There is a manhood-hunger whose wants can only be supplied by the divine Spirit itself."

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

He developed in them a consciousness of a new and higher life; and that higher life was fed by direct communion with God, and by the indwelling of the divine Spirit. So when our Master stands in the midst of this troubled throng, and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," he goes on to show that

that rest is not to be the taking off of any actual physical burden, not multiplying the resources of daily life alone; but he says,

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Now, it is a truth that our enjoyments are multiplied by the successive developments of our nature—by education and refinement. Many think that it is a question whether or not, on the whole, we are happier for being educated. There can be no question that the education, that the development, that the opening of the whole metropolis of the soul, does increase the number of enjoyable avenues; there can be no question that the culture of any particular faculty does render it more susceptible to happiness than it was before; but the question is, considering the world as it is, considering all its vicissitudes, considering the ill-conditioned relations of men in society, is it on the whole better for a man to have this higher development and culture, rendering him more susceptible to happiness, and also, just as certainly, more susceptible to unhappiness, than he was before.

Consider what it is that makes men suffer. If you take an uncultivated man, and place him with a roof over his head, no matter how homely, with straw in a corner on which he may lie down and sleep, with the coarsest bread, and a little food of other kinds, but with none of the amenities and refinements of life, he is perfectly contented, his food is wholesome, and his sleep is sound. We pity him because he is not opened up more, and because his is just the life that pigs lead. They are housed, they have enough to eat, they sleep soundly, but they have no aspiration, and no nature that is capable of aspiring; and we pity them. A man has just that nature in the lower forms of human life; and we say pityingly, "He is content; he is satisfied with it."

But suppose one has been a child of fortune, cultured from the cradle, developed in all the finest tastes and relationships of life; and suppose that by and by, through some mischance, he has been thrown out of the sphere to which he had been accustomed, and going down has come

to that condition in which he has only a crust, a bundle of straw, and a mere shelter over his head? He brings down with him all those acute sensibilities which have been developed in him, the memory of better days, and the capacity to enjoy much or to suffer acutely, and his bread is not sweet to him, his food is not wholesome to him. Why? The bread is good, the food is good; but the man has been accustomed to derive his enjoyment from his higher faculties. Much of his enjoyment hitherto has come through taste; but there is nothing in his present circumstances to feed the taste. Much of it has come from reasoning; but he is thrown out of the sphere of intelligent companionship, and so out of the capacity of reasoning. He has depended for his enjoyment largely upon the refinement and amenities of society—upon the multifarious givings and takings which go on between persons on the higher planes of life in this world; but now he is solitary and alone. He has enough to eat, to drink and to keep him warm; but he has had a development which makes it impossible for him to be content with only these things. He wants higher food, and not having it he brings to his lower condition, through the educated susceptibilities of his higher nature, an amount of suffering and unhappiness which would not be felt by a man far less cultured than he.

So, if you put happiness as the law of the aim of life, it is a question whether, as the world is made, a man is happier by being cultured; but I hold that though happiness may be the result of culture, it is not the end sought in life. Manhood, intrinsic excellence, the soul's appreciation of absolute moral development and spiritual growth—this is transcendently higher than the mere thought of happiness; so that a man should desire to be a larger and a nobler nature, even if that brought more unhappiness with it, rather than to be a small, diminutive nature. I would rather be a suffering man than a happy flea. It is not the law of happiness by which we are to judge of men's estate in this world. There is dignity, there is a sense of honor, of nobility and of moral excellence, that is far more important. There is an inspiration, if it but comes to us, and lifts us up with a consciousness

that we are sons of God and heirs of immortality, which gives to the soul a thrill that no mere pleasure-bearing influence can give it.

Now, in all our relations, it seems to me, we are being made to feel the inconveniences and hindrances of life, from a variety of reasons, which it will not be necessary for me now to state, or discuss. It is not on the line of the reasons of unhappiness, exactly, that I propose to develop my discourse, but on this: That, begining at the lowest estate, unfolding largely as the animal unfolds, and carrying on the process of education, we must consider the question, How shall men meet the embarrassments, the limitations, the accidents, the calamities, the wearinesses, the unsatisfied longings, the bereavements, the sharp sorrows, the sweeping adversities of life? Is there any way in which men can find consolation in these things? Can they be turned to any profitable uses?

As I understand it, it is precisely to this point that our Master spoke when he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I do not understand, in the first place, that he means that he will take away from men their actual burdens. If one be sick it is profitable to say that God may heal him; but I do not consider the prayer of faith as a means promised by Christ to give relief to men. I do not suppose that sickness will necessarily be removed. A man may carry pain, and yet have rest. A man may have sorrow, and yet rejoice. A man may be filled with infirmities and yet triumph. It is this super-imposition of noble faculties or elements upon men that gives explanation to all the paradoxes of the apostle. "Rejoice when you fall into divers trials and temptations;" "Rejoice in weakness;" "Rejoice in infirmities;" "Cast down, but not destroyed"—all those expressions, which are apparently contradictory, are perfectly explained if men consider that we are, as it were, created in strata, and that it is possible for us to be thrown into such relations that the lower part of our nature may be suffering, and yet that out of that suffering may rise such stimulus and consolation in the faculties that lie above them as shall make one, on the whole, happier by the higher

side of his nature, than he is unhappy by the lower side of his nature.

When Roman Emperors, glutted with bestial pleasures, and in roaring triumphs, were putting to death early Christians, or seeing them tormented by wild beasts, do you not suppose that the dying Christian under the lion's paw, or scorching by the torch, was happier than the Nero that stood and gloated over his suffering? Is it not recorded in hundreds and thousands of instances that men in the most abject circumstances of distress in this world have really reigned by the royalty of their thought and feeling? There is such a thing as a man's suffering to the very quick, and yet being conscious that he never was so happy as under his suffering. This could not be if a man was a unit—if the whole mind went into every experience. A man is not a unit in that sense. In one sense, man is a unit, as a church organ is a unit; but it is possible for the lower part of an organ to be out of tune, and for the upper part at the same time to be in tune. Some parts will not speak, or will only speak wrongly, while other parts will speak mellifluously and harmoniously. A man may be tormented by fear, or hunger, or poverty; a thousand mischances may come to his lower nature; and yet he may have such a conscious life in the higher relations that he shall rejoice. Suffering is not suffering any more, under such circumstances.

Much of the suffering which men have in this life is created by them. It is artificial in this sense. For example, a man is an enthusiastic poet or scholar. He lives in dreams and in visions. Having inherited an estate, he is so indifferent to it that one part wastes, and another part wastes, without his knowledge or care. He does not watch the progress of decay, and part after part goes, until he finds himself shut up in the narrowest dwelling, and with the fewest resources. Still he goes on rejoicing and living in his higher life. At last he comes almost to poverty, scarcely having noticed it. You cannot torment him by calling his attention to these facts. You may throw poverty at him, you may take wealth away from him; but it is not in the realm of these things that he lives.

You know that sometimes skirmishers, when they are on dangerous ground, put up the cap of a soldier upon a pole, to draw the enemy's fire, while they conceal themselves; and as the cap is riddled by bullets they lie in their safe hiding-place and laugh. They are not there, and so they escape.

So, too, when relief is promised there are various ways in which it may come. A man may be relieved of distress by having it taken away, or by being lifted up in spirit to a higher level where he shall no longer be subject to the lower range of troubles. Both things we may expect from divine providence; but in our personal relations to the Lord Jesus Christ, relief comes in the main by such an elevation of one's life that the things which tormented him, though they are not divested of pain-bearing elements, cease to be so painful as if he had nothing but them. If you live higher than troubles you can rejoice when they come.

We may, therefore, look at troubles as leading us to a higher life, and as developing in us those dispositions which make communion with God possible—which bring the soul into such a state that it may commune with God.

This, it seems to me, is the secret of the universe—the problem of the ages. We are not what we seem. We are not simply unfolded beasts; we are animal in our nature, but we are unfolding to that point in which we take hold upon the possibility of communion with the everlasting God. Personal intercourse with God; the intersphering of our souls by the divine soul; the interchange of thought and feeling and sympathy with the indwelling Holy Ghost—this is not a figure; it is not a metaphor: it is an absolute reality; and it is the final end toward which all education and all culture in men is developing; and just in proportion as in the variety of the experiences of life, either voluntary or involuntary, men are by troubles lifted higher and higher so that they come into the actual possibility of communion with God, in that proportion is fulfilled the declaration of the Master, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is the rest of the spirit, it is

the rest of the nobler, divine man, that we are seeking to develop in ourselves, and that is promised to us.

First, these words are addressed to all those who are, or have been, or are likely to be, continually afflicted by sickness and suffering. To those who have a good constitution, who have good digestion, who sleep well, and who have vigor and power, there is apt to be very slender sympathy for those who all their life-long are sick with bodily sickness. It is sometimes hard to bear the lack of courage, the constant murmurings, the daily complaints of those who are sick; it is hard to bear the helplessness, the multiplying wants, and the unreasonableness of sickness; but do you know that one person out of every five on the globe is always sick? Do you know that for every three or four golden threads there is one iron thread that runs through the whole fabric of life? Do you know that we move together, a great company, and that the light which shines upon us is shaded by portentous darkness? And in looking upon men who are sick our hearts should go out toward them in love and in sympathy. It is not enough for us to say, "O well, somebody will take care of them." Some great heart must brood over the sick, and sympathize with them. No one can catalogue all the various forms in which the imagination torments them by a sense of their uselessness. No one can enumerate the ways in which they are tormented by the wounding of their pride, by the blighting of their aspirations, and by the restraining of their ambitions. The great realm of sickness is so populous in our midst that if you do not gauge it, and take statistics, you have no conception of the amount of suffering that is undergone by those that are sick, or by those that are feeble, and so are obliged to act as though they were sick, most of their time. O, that there could be such a thing as a light from Christ dawning upon them! There is. He himself took our sicknesses. He declared that he carried them. It is one of the precious declarations of Scripture that the nature of God is such that he has thought, and sympathy, and providential care, and spiritual inspection and mercy for those who are heavy laden by reason of sickness. So, every person who is invalided, every person who is pushed out of the ranks

of able-bodied men, every person who is carried along the way of sickness, has a right to feel that Jesus Christ was manifested in this world as one who had compassion upon the sick. Did he not have compassion upon them? Where was there more tenderness, where was there more exquisite mercy, than our Saviour showed to the sick? And how enthusiastic they were where he came! The whole community was convulsed. Those that had sick brought them out, a whole village or town at once, and broke into earnest importunity; so that he became an all-healing Saviour.

And to-day, what house is there without its shadow? The little child is no more; the old matron is trembling in her last days; the son afar off has been cast down and crushed; the ship sank, and the mother's hope is destroyed; and if its sad voices could be drawn out, the whole world would chant a requiem; for there is not an hour or a moment in which sickness, and suffering, and death, and anguish are not abroad.

I bring to those who are sick, those who fear sickness, those who behold the sick around about them, and who minister to them—I bring to all these Jesus Christ, who says to the sick, "Come unto me and I will give you rest. I am the Saviour of those that are sick. Lift up your thought. Abandon the light that is of the body. Learn to look to me. Direct your thoughts forward to that future, to that realm of everlasting glory, where there is no sickness, no contagion, no miasma, no pain, no suffering, forever more."

There are those who are oppressed by reason of poverty. The curse of their poverty is sordidness and selfishness. It is certainly hard to be without the comforts of life; but men can get along without them, provided they have moral nature enough. Our boys who were brought up tenderly and in luxury at the North went into the war, and were inspired with the *esprit de corps* of the army, and with the highest feeling of enthusiastic patriotism; and they found it no great task to lie on the ground, and to eat hard tack and whatever else they could get hold of. It would have been considered a most unmanly thing to have complained. It would have driven a man out of the ranks. A man may be reduced very

low; he may see his comforts diminish until they become very scanty, and not be made unhappy, if he only has manhood in a high degree. But it is not so easy to see those whom you love suffer in poverty. The children of the rich can be sent to Florida, if their health requires it; but if you have not the wherewith even to warm your room in the short winter days and the long winter nights, if, with the slender means which you have you can scarcely give the coarsest viands to the child that is the joy of your life, though her face is pale, and she is wasting away, and you know that if she could spend one winter in a warmer climate she could be saved, you cannot send her. Death is coming, step by step, and in the accumulated suffering of love, the parent says, "It is poverty that is killing me by killing her." It is not where the shoes wear out, it is not where the coat is threadbare, that poverty is unbearable: it is where it gashes pride; it is where it pinches love; it is where it starves the soul; it is where we look out and see other children coming up to honor and power by education, while we cannot send our children to school, while we cannot clothe them for school; where for want of means we cannot do for our children that which we would—that is the place where the hardship of poverty comes in. Nor do I know of any way in which men can sustain themselves under the ten thousand trials which come upon them in life through poverty except by living in the higher realm of reliance upon divine sympathy and strength. If in the midst of poverty one can trust in God, saying, "I am his child; he knows my want; this trouble of mine is not a mere accident; it was sent of God; and I will stand here as a sentinel because he wants some one to bear poverty and at the same time exhibit the royalty of the divine nature; because he wants me to show what Christianity ought to be"—if one can do that, his example is the best education that the child can have. If the children see that the mother is trusting, and silent, and hopeful of the light that is to come; and if she says, "O my children, few flowers we have here; yet take heart, for in the garden of the Lord sweet flowers will bloom forever;" and if they see the father true, manly, noble in suffering from poverty, not

envious, not jealous, not complaining, but trusting God, and singing in the night, then they have in the vision of moral power which is presented to them an education that no academy and no university can give.

Now, if poverty tends to make you more animal, you are of all men most miserable; but if you will hear your Master, he will stand on the verge of your distress, and say, "Come unto me. Lift up your head. Carry your thoughts to God. Live in him, and he will draw your spirit up into such relations with him and into such an atmosphere that, while your roots may be covered with dirt, your topmost branches shall be bright with blossoms, reaching toward heaven."

There is a great deal of nameless suffering in the world; there is in the world a great deal of heart-hunger which is hard to explain; but certain it is that in the allotments among men there are souls that are endowed royally, but that have no legitimate objects on which to expend themselves. This is one of the strangest things in life. I see, everywhere I go, women that have received the highest development that education can give them, standing in the family, not called to be teachers, not called to be wives; in the providence of God having no especial function. They have treasures of learning and literature; they have refinements that fit them for great-souledness; but in life they have nothing to do. They are very often environed by such social influences as to prevent their devoting their talents to objects of usefulness. The proud father and the urgent mother compel them to refuse such and such openings because they think them demeaning and unworthy. So, hindered by parental influence or social circumstances, there are persons who go with great sealed fountain hearts through life capable of immense development—hearts that are as the very heavens above, full of dews, full of rains, full of sunshine—and yet a desert underneath like Sahara.

But to me the saddest thing in this world is not to see a man beaten out of his fortune and cast through various degrees of suffering down, down, down. Why, I know those who have gone from the utmost affluence to the very bottom of want almost, but who are nobler and more lovable to-day

than they were in their amplitude. I will tell you the saddest thing I have seen (I am speaking from life: though none of you know whom I mean). I knew one who was made to be a royal woman; who married herself to a man that developed as the pig develops, and that became obese, gross, gluttonous, hoggish. She, affianced to him, naturally delicate, refined, clinging insensibly to him, though virtuous, and in many respects admirable, yet, as I could see, underwent the process of deterioration. The taste was lowered; the thoughts were brought down; things were no longer vulgar which once were absolutely repulsive to her. She leaned against him till at last the odor of the sty was on her.

Now, to see a great-hearted nature go down in that way is the saddest thing in this world—not vice, not crime, but simple deterioration, lowering, lowering, lowering. Oh for a divine inspiration, oh for an angelic touch, oh for some misery that could wake persons out of such a dream of peace and contentment and make them unhappy, so as that unhappiness might make them lift themselves up higher!

How many men, how many women, there are who are conscious that they have never expended the best part of their nature because circumstances have not permitted it!

I recollect a man, most chivalric, noble, generous, like a prince, who married a selfish, petted woman; and he was one whose wife was to him very much what a wasp is in a man's hat. She buzzed and stung him. Hers was pretty much all the companionship he had. He shut himself up from the outside world. To develop largeness and susceptibility under such circumstances is to lay one's self open to a perpetual irruption of torments; and so he circumscribed himself till he was as dry as a hickory post cut twenty years ago, with no dormant buds, no blossoming flowers, perpetually shielding and holding in retrenchment the better powers of the soul, until at last in their place was absolute hardness and dryness. Oh what waste! Oh what distress! But now he is dead. I mean that he is buried now: he was dead a great while ago. I thank God that he is dead. We are shocked to hear that some persons are dead; but I wish that all such persons

as these would die. The greatest mercy that you can wish such persons is that they were dead.

These strange phases of life are described a great deal more often in novels than in preaching; because you know preaching must be dignified, and orthodox, and there are nice things about it which stand in the way of such disclosures. But what is preaching but medical practice? What is preaching but bringing the doctor to men, as they are? The church is a hospital. Ministers are practicing physicians; and if there be an ulcer, an ulcer I must call it, and I must treat it accordingly. How seldom are men's yearnings and hungers and heart-longings brought out in the light of divine truth in the pulpit; and yet how they exist in life! How many persons are suffering perpetual famine! How many have bread enough who from heart-hunger are dying! How many persons there are in the lowest walks of life who have all the aspirations and tasteful elements that fit them for the higher sphere, but who cannot go up. How many are ill-matched or ill-assorted, who are hampered in life and are unable to rise, though they are conscious of possessing superior qualities! How many persons, by reason of their peculiar circumstances, have to suppress some of the strongest and noblest tendencies of their being!

Do you suppose a mother could see her daughter badly married, and could hear of her suffering from week to week, and not experience pain in her behalf? And is the mother any better than God? Does not he care for people that suffer? He does. He cares for everything that torments your life. There is nothing that concerns your welfare which is not a matter of interest to him.

Then, O ye heart-sick ones; O ye that are afflicted with famine of soul, ye have a God, ye have a Jesus, that has suffered as you suffer, that has been tried in all points as you are, without sin, that he might be a merciful High Priest to you.

Who shall speak of all the suffering that goes on in life under the forms of bereavement? Who shall speak of domestic sufferings that can neither be thrown off nor borne? The best things in this life, of course, are the unwritable

things. The coarser things are the most easily expressed. We can go on and describe battles, and kingdoms, and commerce, and science; but that subtle life, that wonderful play of experience, which springs from the finest sides of human nature in their very finest relations—who can tell what that is? Who can describe it? Nobody can; but it goes on.

Persons are suffering in a way that only God can understand, from the loss of friends, or from domestic troubles that are worse than death. I go to them as a minister, and sit down, and say, "I hope you are sustained under your affliction." Well, that is a very good thing to say; but what does it amount to? I say to them, "You ought to be patient." That, too, is a good thing to say; but how far does it go? You cannot get near the real center trouble. The things which most torment many persons are things which they themselves cannot express in language. They are not such things as can be framed into ideas. There is soul-suffering which lies back of any analysis or any consciousness. Oftentimes persons cannot tell what ails them. They do not know what the heart-swells in them mean. Only God knows, and he *does* know. Do you suppose God is thinking about theology all the time? He is thinking about you. Do you suppose he is thinking about laws and governments? Not a sparrow falls to the ground that he does not notice it, he says. Blessed be God for such statements as that! The hairs of our head are all numbered. So there is not a trouble in any soul that the eye of the Lord, sweeter than any mother's, does not behold; and it is not without its meaning. If you could hear Christ speaking to you, he would say, "Oh, my child, I am with you in darkness, and I am leading you. Come unto me. Learn of me. I am meek and lowly. You shall find rest to your souls. Let this trouble guide you into a higher life, where, the moment your soul touches the light, you will find comfort and joy."

There is great suffering, also, of a more obvious and common kind, in the overthrow of men's ambitions. The ambitions of men may have in them much that is wrong and much that is selfish; but it is a noble thing for a man to be ambitious. The impulse to develop and go higher is a very

manly impulse. That contentment which leaves a man without any swell or root-power or springiness is the contentment of the brute and not of the Christian man. We suffer a great deal more from the want of ambition than from the excess of it. And the sufferings of overthrown ambition—who can tell them? There is no registration of these.

The cheapest things in this world are men. Here is a man who has filled the whole community with excitement. Everybody is talking about him. Everything is radiant. He is on the topmost wave of popularity. Something occurs to dampen the public ardor concerning him. New combinations are formed which are unfavorable to him. He gets one buffet here and another there. He begins to go down; and by and by there comes a swell of political revolution, and he is thrust out, and the newspapers ridicule him, and say that he has had his day; that he can go home now and stay there; that he will not be wanted any more. Men speak of him as having gone to the dogs. But he is a man full of sentience and sensibility. He had his various faults, one of which was that he was conspicuous, and that everybody saw everything about him; but when he is swept out of prosperity, and thrust aside, is he then to be an object of our ribaldry and contempt? Do you not suppose that God thinks of such a man?

One of the sweetest and most touching things, to me, in the whole life of Christ was that of which I spoke last Sunday night—namely, the circumstance that Jesus, when the man whose eyes were opened was kicked out of the synagogue, went hunting him up. There were all over Jerusalem thousands of rich and prominent people whom the Saviour might have consorted with; but instead of seeking them, hearing that this poor creature had been thrown out of the synagogue, that he had gone away, and that nobody knew where he was, he went in search of him. He cared more for him than for all the prosperous men in Jerusalem. Methinks that many a man who has been hurled out of power, and thrust into obscurity, and had men gnash their teeth upon him, and explode their jests at him, has had the heart of God nearer to him in his disfigurement and disgrace than when he was at the height

of his prosperity. Some men fall far down from worldly honors and land close by the gate of heaven. There are many men who were never so near themselves, and never so manly, as when, after having been chastised and cleansed and purified, they stand in obscurity. No poems are chanted to them, no orations are pronounced upon them, no receptions are given them, no honors are bestowed upon them; but there is a way opened between their inward life and the life of Jesus; and the power of the world to come overshadows them, and they are beginning to feel their pulse thrill to those touches that before long shall break out into the choral rapture of the heavenly land.

A word in regard to the embarrassments and worldly troubles which are falling thick in our time. Blessed are they who, when chastised by the Lord, follow the hand that has smitten them till they trace it back to the heart that moved the stroke. To lose one's property, to be distressed in one's business, sometimes is the best schooling that men ever have. Many a man has learned manliness by disaster who never learned it so well in any other way. And there is courage in trouble, there is patience in trouble, there is a way to one's self in trouble, there is a consideration of who are and who are not one's friends in trouble, there is an estimate of the world in its failures and successes in trouble, different from what men experience in prosperity.

I have before me those that have seen both extremes. Tell me, brethren, have you not gathered more wisdom out of darkness than out of light? Tell me whether the winter did not give you more health and strength than the summer did. Tell me whether that rude, acerb fruit which was put to your lips in the time of your distress, after all had not in it more medicament than the luscious fruit eaten in the time of your great prosperity. It is a good thing to be afflicted, provided affliction opens the higher life to a man, and draws him away from visible things, so that he learns that his life consists not in the things which he possesses. He walks in a palace—not in a palace made of marble, but in the palace of his soul. He that dwells in the midst of serene thoughts and heavenly aspirations; he that has contentment in hope

and faith; he that, being hated, loves; he that, being smitten, is like wheat that gives forth grain to him that threshes it—he is of God, and by every wind is driven toward God. Things that seem the worst are often the best things in life. Blessed bankruptcy that brings riches! Blessed treading down that is as the ox that treads seed into the soil that it may spring up and bring forth fruit a hundred-fold!

But this subject is interminable. I am circumnavigating the whole orb of human experience. There is no end to it. Yet there is this clue. When our Master says to men who are weary and heavy laden, "Come to me and I will give you rest," he strikes that one single note, that blessed chord, which has vibrated through the ages. For, by faith in this promise, how did the apostles themselves live, men of mighty suffering and mighty joy! There is not so great a marvel in human literature as the New Testament, which is a recital of persecution, and disaster, and death, and suffering; and yet there is not a morbid word in it. There is not a minor note in it. It is the most triumphant book in the world. You may push out John from having written a Gospel; you may say that Matthew was not Matthew, that Luke was not Luke, and that none of them were inspired; but I say there is not on the earth, and there never has been in the world, a book so in sympathy with men's weaknesses and sufferings and sorrows, or a book that threw such light and hope on them all, and poured such balm and precious ointment on every wound of human life, as the New Testament. There is the book; and it will live as long as the world has a groan in it; as long as there is a sorrow to be assuaged; as long as there is a weakness to be strengthened; as long as there is an aspiration to be developed; as long as there is a manhood to be unfolded. Just as long as men need to know the way to higher attainments, just so long, not because of this or that doctrine or theory of instruction, but on account of its essential tendencies, the New Testament will be the bread of life and the water of life to men.

To all you that are walking in the way of the old saints, I say, Be not surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you. Do not count it strange. Do you shed tears in secret

places? Millions have done so before you who now laugh in heaven. Do you mourn in desolated households? Blushing are the flowers of those who planted seeds in darkness and night. Does it seem to you that your burdens are heavier than you can bear? Down through the ages the voice of Jesus and of God himself sounds out to men in dungeons, in the wilderness, in places of torment and torture, "Come unto me;" and down to us, through the clear air of this Sabbath morning, not as thunder, but as a sweet small voice full of love and sympathy, comes the message, "All ye that are heavy laden, come unto me."

The heart of Christ is a haven large enough to give anchorage to every craft that sails on the stormy sea of life. The soul of Jesus is rich enough, and full enough of gentleness and sympathy, to supply the want of the whole created universe. Come, taste and see that he is gracious; and by the power of faith and love lift yourselves higher into that nobler manhood out of which comes immortality.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

BLESSED be thy name, O Lord, our God, for the glowing disclosures which thou hast made to us of thyself, and of the dwelling where thou art. Blessed be thy name for all the testimonies which have been gathering through the ages of thy servants' victories in life over life, and of their victories over death. Around about thee now are innumerable hosts—the spirits of just men made perfect; and in their midst are ours. Our children are there; our parents are there; brothers and sisters, gone forth from the battle, are crowned, and are in the joy of victory, there. There are those who were poor upon earth, but who are rich now. There are those that on earth were wasted by sickness and long-suffering, but that shall never be sick any more. There are children of grief whose tears day and night were as the dews; but there shall never be any more crying or pain where they are, and thou shalt wipe the tears from every eye. There are those who were infirm in hope; and yet now they are strengthened with everlasting strength. Those that could not see thee now behold thee. Those who with much doubt and with many fears all their life long wrestled, seeking thee, are found of thee, and are swallowed up with sweet delight in thy presence.

Grant, we pray thee, to all who are weary, to-day, such an insight of the coming rest that their souls shall be refreshed. This is thy place of meeting; this is thine house; this is thy day; and these are thine own people. We beseech of thee that thou wilt look upon those who are discouraged by the greatness of the way, and by the infirmities, by the burdens, by the trials and by the troubles that afflict them. Grant that they may have a sense of thy nearness, and of the preciousness of thy thoughts toward them. How dear to us are our own children! What a joy to us is their prosperity! How do we sorrow over their trouble! But what are we compared to thee? We are as sticks compared with the birds that sing upon them. We are as stones compared with the men that walk upon them. Thou that art perfect in the fullness of holiness and love—with what ineffable sympathy dost thou look down upon thy children! The bruised reed thou wilt not break. The smoking flax thou wilt not quench. In thee we are glowing with Christian life and brightness. Thou dost look with compassion upon all—upon every soul that is in trouble, and upon every one that is wistful and yearning. Thou dost look upon those that are conscious of their want rather than of their supply; upon those that desire defense more than they desire thee; upon those that long for thy power more than for thy love; upon those who are yet under the impulse of fear, and not of trust. Thou dost behold all the varying experiences of the human soul, that is tried in a thousand ways; that is buffeted and driven hither and thither; that is tempted by selfishness and by avarice. Thou dost behold all conditions of men; and as by thy sun thou dost in the summer overbrood the whole continent, and bring forth all things of their kind, so dost thou brood over us, and bring forth in us fruit that is pleasing to thee.

Vouchsafe, we pray thee, this morning, to listen to all those who come murmuring thoughts of gladness and of gratitude. We rejoice that there are so many that are hoping. We rejoice that there are so many who have reason to be grateful, and are grateful. Look upon all those whose experience is that of hope and of courage. Grant that their fear may never take the place of their courage and their hope. Over the sea and through the storm, by day and by night, may they still be victorious, and be saved by faith.

We pray that thou wilt bless all the churches in this city. Wilt thou bless the pastors of them. Wilt thou give them strength of body and strength of mind. Enable them to preach the truth; and grant that they may do it under the divine inspiration, so that the truth shall be carried as a living power home to their people.

Grant that all the churches in the great city near us may be refreshed by thy presence; and may the living power of the truth be felt over all this nation. We look to thee, O Lord our God, to revive thy work everywhere.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that knowledge may prevail, and that the spirit of intelligence and holiness may shine abroad, bearing unnumbered blessings on every side.

We pray for the nations of the earth, that they may be bound together. May all mankind be united more by sympathy. We pray for the ignorant and the oppressed. Grant that the growth of men may be such that tyrants shall be unable to oppress them any more. May the nations of the earth at last learn war no more. May they no longer cultivate selfishness and organize it into law. Grant that the fellowship of the divine Spirit may bind together all people. Make the whole human race as one household in the Lord, their Deliverer and their Father.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT thy blessing to rest, we pray thee, our Father, on the word spoken. Comfort the comfortless. Succor those that are imperiled. Deliver the tempted. Encourage the desponding. Give rest to the weary. Grant thyself, that thou mayest be all in all. Accept our endeavor to make thee known. Pardon the imperfection of our services. Complete thy work of grace in us, in life, and in death; and then bring us to thyself in the heavenly land, where we shall see thee as thou art, and love as we are loved. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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